

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0421

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 0657

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, YS, YE

SUBJ: PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI ON PDRY

BEGIN SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI THE PDRY REGIME REMAINS MARXIST WITH MANY SOUTHERNERS FLEEING TO THE NORTH TO ESCAPE THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRESSION. YEMEN'S RELATIONS WITH PDRY ARE CURRENTLY NEITHER "BAD NOR GOOD". ALTHOUGH COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IS GROWING, THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE. DESPITE AL-HAMDI'S SKEPTICISM THAT SAUDI EFFORTS TO MODERATE THE REGIME WILL SUCCEED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, HE NONETHELESS THOUGHT THESE EFFORTS WORTH A TRY. IN THIS CONNECTION HE ALSO SAID THAT YEMEN WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS IF USG RESUMES RELATIONS WITH PDRY AND OFFERED TO RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH PRESIDENT SALIM RUBAY'I ALI IF USG SO DESIRES. I TOLD HIM AS OF NOW THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN US RELATIONS WITH PDRY BUT THAT WE WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH IF THERE IS ANY MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION OR IF USG DECIDES TO AVAIL ITSELF OF HIS OFFER. WE INTEND TO SUBMIT AIRGRAM ON SUBJECT OF US-PDRY RELATIONS WHOSE RESUMPTION WE BELIEVE  
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SHOULD NOW BE RECONSIDERED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING FEBRUARY 13 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI IN TAIZ, DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON CURRENT SITUATION IN PDRY AND YEMEN'S RELATIONS WITH THAT STATE. AL-HAMDI DESCRIBED THE ADENI REGIME AS MARXIST WHOSE LONG-TERM IDEOLOGICAL GOAL STILL REMAINS RADICALIZATION OF THE PENINSULA AND OF THE

ARAB WORLD. AL-HAMDI STATED THAT THE COUNTRY IS UNDER THE FIRM CONTROL OF THE PARTY'S SECURITY APPARATUS AND THAT HE SEES LITTLE HOPE THAT MODERATES, SUCH AS EXIST, HAVE A CHANCE TO STAND UP AGAINST THE REGIME. AL-HAMDI NOTED THAT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IS ENTIRELY DOMINATED BY IDEOLOGUES AND FOREIGN ADVISORS (PRIMARILY FROM EAST GERMANY) WHO HAVE AS THEIR PURPOSE THE IDEOLOGICAL INDOCTRINATION OF THE NEW GENERATION. AL-HAMDI OBSERVED IN THIS REGARD THAT FOR THIS REASON MANY SOUTH YEMENI TRIBESMEN ARE FLEEING TO THE NORTH IN ORDER TO SAVE THEIR CHILDREN FROM THIS TRAINING, PARTICULARLY THEIR DAUGHTERS.

2. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT HE DOUBTED IF THERE IS ANY RIFT BETWEEN SALIM RUBAY'I ALI AND ABD AL-FATTAH ISMA'IL. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT RUBAY'I OF THE TWO SEEMS MORE OPEN TO REASON AND TO PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS. AL-HAMDI WAS SKEPTICAL THAT "SAUDI DOLLARS" WILL MAKE MUCH OF AN IMPACT ON THE IDEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS OF THE SOUTHERN LEADERSHIP BUT HE ALSO SAW NO HARM IF THE SAUDIS AND OTHERS TRY TO ESTABLISH A PRESENCE IN PDRY AS A WAY OF ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH THE MORE PRAGMATIC ELEMENTS OF THE REGIME.

3. IN THE CONTEXT OF SAUDI-PDRY RELATIONS, AL-HAMDI ALSO STATED THAT YEMEN WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS IF THE USG EVENTUALLY DECIDES TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH PDRY AS A WAY OF SUPPORTING SAUDI EFFORTS THERE. HE REITERATED HIS SKEPTICISM THAT THESE EFFORTS WILL MOVE QUICKLY BUT HE AGREED THAT THEY ARE WORTH A TRY.

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4. AL-HAMDI DESCRIBED YEMEN-PDRY RELATIONS AS "NOT BAD AND NOT GOOD". HE SAID THAT NORTH YEMEN INTENDS TO MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE WITH ITS SOUTHERN BROTHERS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS IN ORDER NOT TO GIVE ANY GROUNDS FOR OFFENSE. HE NOTED THAT IN SOME AREAS LIKE ECONOMICS THERE IS ALREADY GOOD COOPERATION WITH THE SOUTH BUT ON KEY ISSUES LIKE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE IF ANY PROGRESS.

5. I TOLD AL-HAMDI THAT AS OF NOW THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH PDRY BUT THAT IF PDRY IS INTERESTED IN RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WE WILL BE RESPONSIVE. USG HAS NO INTENTION OF GETTING AHEAD OF SAUDI ARABIA WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WE ALSO WISH TO COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH YEMEN WHICH WE CONSIDER TO BE IN THE LONG RUN MORE IMPORTANT TO THE OVERALL STABILITY OF THE PENINSULA THAN SOUTH YEMEN. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT HE APPRECIATES US COORDINATION WITH YEMEN IN THE PAST

RE PDRY. IN THIS CONNECTION HE STATED THAT IF THE USG WISHES HIM TO RAISE THE SUBJECT OF RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH SALIM RUBAY'I ALI HE IS PREPARED TO DO SO. I REPLIED THAT I WOULD CONVEY HIS OFFER TO MY GOVERNMENT, WHILE STRESSING THAT AS OF THE PRESENT MOMENT WE WOULD WISH HIM TO DO NOTHING UNTIL THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAS MORE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE PROBLEM. I ADDED THAT IN ANY CASE WE WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT AS BEFORE WITH HIS GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD BUT MERELY WISHED TO MAKE THE OFFER IF THE USG BELIEVES IT MIGHT BE USEFUL.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS UNDERSTANDABLY AN AMBIVALENT FEELING WITHIN THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE SOUTH. ON THE ONE HAND THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE SAUDIS IN THEIR HASTE TO COURT THE SOUTH WILL TEND TO LESSEN THEIR AID TO THE NORTH. (THERE IS ALSO SOME CONCERN THAT THE SAUDIS MAY BE INTENT ON PLAYING TWO SIDES AGAINST THE OTHER.) ON THE OTHER HAND  
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THE NORTH YEMENIS ARE ALSO ABLE TO SEE THE UTILITY OF TRYING TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH SOUTHER PRAGMATIC AND MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE HOPE THAT THE SOUTH WILL EVENTUALLY EVOLVE IN THE SAME WAY THE NORTH HAS IN THE LAST FOUR OR FIVE YEARS. ONE THING COMES CLEARLY THROUGH, HOWEVER, AND THAT IS THAT MANY HERE IN THE NORTH BELIEVE THAT THE TASK OF MODERATING THE SOUTH WILL BE A DIFFICULT ONE BUT THAT IT SHOULD AT LEAST BE TRIED. WE INTEND TO SUBMIT AN AIRGRAM ON THIS SUBJECT FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION. IN BRIEF, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT THE TIME IS RIPE FOR US TO RE-EVALUATE OUR POLICY VIS-A-VIS PDRY NOT ONLY AS A BACKSTOP TO SAUDI EFFORTS THERE, BUT ALSO AS PART OF OUR POLICY TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH ALL STATES NO MATTER WHAT OUR IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES MIGHT BE. I WILL, OF COURSE, BE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION AND ALSO TO WHAT IF ANY RESPONSE THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE TO AL-HAMD'I'S OFFER.  
SCOTES

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